

Facing the Facts in Germany

By Freda Utleby

CHINA was lost and the Korean war thrust upon us because a gang of Communist sympathizers and dumb "liberals" got their hands on the levers which control our public opinion and policy. Europe may be lost because the western powers are still letting passion and prejudice overrule reason, or because the American public is today as ignorant, or misinformed, about Germany as it used to be about China.

The realities of life in the "peoples' democracies" are too well known by now for the creation of another Yenan myth. However, in the case of Germany, the Kremlin has no need of such characters as Owen Lattimore, Stewart Service, John Patton Davies, Carter Vincent, Edgar Snow, E. C. Carter, and the rest of the band which served it so well in China, but has now fallen victim to "McCarthyism." All that is required to keep Europe disunited and defenseless is to pour a little oil on the smouldering embers of the fires of hatred, resentment, and distrust lit by Hitler's abominable crimes and by two world wars. In place of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Moscow now enjoys the aid

of such outfits as the Society for the Prevention of World War III, which propagates a Nazi theory in reverse (namely, that the German race, or nation, is innately wicked and aggressive, and constitutes a far greater menace than the Soviet Union or Communism). Since most people are afraid of being smeared as "pro-Nazi" if they raise their voices in favor of an enlightened and intelligent policy toward Germany, the Dictator of All the Russias can sit back and watch the apostles of race hatred and vengeance do a better job for him than the Communists are now capable of performing.

Like it or not, every sensible person knows that Europe cannot be defended unless the Germans are enlisted on our side. It stands to reason that this cannot be done so long as we continue to treat them as delinquents with inherited criminal tendencies requiring constant supervision and denied the rights and liberties which we ourselves enjoy. In a word, we must cease to apply either the old Roman adage of "woe to the vanquished," or the modern "totalitarian liberal" principle of guilt by heredity, if we are to create

a viable European defense community.

IT MUST also be realized that we cannot hope to revive, and utilize for good ends, the valor and endurance, love of country and military genius of our late enemies until we offer them a more hopeful prospect than that of serving as cannon fodder for the defense of France. The late Dr. Kurt Schumacher was voicing the sentiments of millions of Germans who are neither Socialists nor neutralists when he said shortly before his death last fall:

What we are really afraid of is that a European army would treat Germany merely as a convenient battleground on which to wage the defense of other nations. The decisive question is not how many divisions are to be stationed in Europe. It is, rather, attainment of a military conception under which Germany will be defended as an equal by united forces, the same as any other country.

German fears that their soldiers will be treated as expendable colonial troops were naturally aroused by our having coupled the European Defense Community Treaty with a "Peace Contract" which severely curtails the Federal Republic's sovereignty and perpetuates Western extraterritorial rights in Germany. Readers of the *New York Times* have been misled by the statement that "these accords admit an armed and sovereign West Germany to equality in Europe." It's not true.

The contractual agreement starts out by admitting that the retention of these rights is inconsistent with "the purpose of integrating the Federal Republic in the European Community." But immediately afterward it goes on to say that the western powers will retain such "special rights" as are "necessary in the common interest of the signatory states, having regard to the special international situation of Germany." "Common interest" is a very wide term. It would appear to include Britain's interest in shackling German industrial competition, France's aversion to German re-unification, and the prejudices of the New Dealers in the U.S. High Commissioner's entourage against free private enterprise.

Nor only do the western powers "retain the rights, heretofore exercised, or held by them, relating to the stationing of armed forces in Germany, and the protection of their security." The German taxpayer is to continue paying at least part of the cost of maintaining them in the luxury to which they have become accustomed. The houses, hotels, clubs, swimming pools and other amenities which we requisitioned for our exclusive use at the beginning of the Occupation, are not to be returned to their German owners, unless we choose, or until the Federal Republic can provide suitable alternative accommodations. Since millions of expellees, refugees

and bombed-out families are still living in huts, cellars, barracks, air-raid shelters, and former concentration camps, and since the Federal Republic is striving to provide accommodation for the escapees now flooding in from East Germany at the rate of 1500 a day, there is, of course, no possibility of its being able to provide such alternative accommodations.

The Germans are not consoled by the American High Commissioner's recently announced emergency program for building housing for the latest refugees. The sum to be provided for this purpose, including a 300,000-dollar grant from the Ford Foundation, was reported by Michael Hoffmann in the *New York Times* on March 15, 1953, to be sufficient only to provide shelter for the number fleeing into Berlin in one day. This drop in the bucket of the huge need for new housing contrasts somewhat unfavorably with the 151,000-dollar cost of each mansion built for such U.S. officials in Germany as John Patton Davies.

Thanks to poor or prejudiced reporting in the American press, it is generally assumed that we have been very generous in our treatment of Germany. It is true that Marshall Plan aid helped to set Germany on her feet and repair the ravages of dismantlement, but it also has to be noted that the West Germans have all along paid far more in occupation costs to the three western allies than they have received in American aid.

The total of U.S. aid since VJ Day amounts to three billion dollars. The total of occupation costs comes to around ten billion dollars for the same period. This sum does not of course include the billions of dollars' worth of machinery removed as reparations or destroyed; or the value of the German mines and iron and steel plants seized or "sequestered" by the French in the Saar.

WHILE West Germany is to continue providing restitution to the surviving victims of Nazi persecution, and has also undertaken to pay a three-quarter-billion-dollar indemnity to Israel, no provision is made for the restitution to the Germans of the billions of marks of private German property abroad, patents and trade marks confiscated by the allies in contravention of international law. The Federal Government also waives the right to compensation for German property looted by Allied nationals who often carted away furniture, linen, silver, pictures, and other precious objects from the houses they occupied.

Most Germans are prepared to accept such inequities as the price of defeat. A surprisingly large number admit that it is just that they should be called on to atone for Nazi crimes and for having started World War II. I found that even men and women who have suffered such grave injustice at our hands as imprisonment for years on false charges, or no charge at all, consider that "re-

sentment" is a luxury which no European can afford in this time of peril. But precisely those Germans who value liberty object most strongly to the clause in the Conventions which permits the western powers to proclaim a state of emergency and suspend the Constitutional safeguards of freedom, whenever, in their opinion, there is a threat of "subversion of the liberal democratic basic order." It is this proviso which has given valid ground for the Social Democratic plea to the Federal Constitutional Court at Karlsruhe that a treaty which invalidates the Constitution is unconstitutional.

As if to prove the justice of the German Socialists' contention that the western allies cannot be trusted not to abuse their power to disregard *habeas corpus* and other civil liberties, the British High Commissioner arrested last January seven former Nazis accused of "plotting" to subvert democracy by influencing the Free Democratic Party. They are still held in prison without trial, without seeing a lawyer, and without any evidence of any crime, conspiracy or plot against the "basic democratic order."

THE Germans are naturally wary of the term "democratic order," in view both of the ambiguity of the term and our past record. During the first years of the Occupation we equated anti-Communist with anti-democrat and pro-Nazi, and went so

far as to insist on Communist participation in local government, and on Communists being given their fair share of editorial jobs on newspapers and on the radio. Since Western government leaders often state that we want to negotiate a settlement with Soviet Russia, the cynics point out that the day might come again when anti-Communists would be regarded as constituting a threat to "the basic democratic order."

We also retain "all rights relating to Germany as a whole, including the unification of Germany and a peace settlement." This means that the Germans are forbidden to negotiate with Moscow themselves for the reunification of Germany, while the western powers are left free to negotiate a settlement with Moscow at Germany's expense. The Germans know that, given the opportunity, this is precisely what many Frenchmen would like to do, and they fear that Britain might not be averse to such a deal. So this clause is regarded as particularly obnoxious.

The above details concerning the contents of the "Peace Contract" are sufficient to show that we are still trying to have it both ways. While demanding that the Germans rearm we are also insisting on our retention of most of the Occupation privileges and powers, originally claimed as necessary for the purpose of "demilitarizing" them.

We frequently both outrage German public opinion and arouse doubts as to the sincerity of our

present anti-Soviet policy, by our insistence that old Allied Control Orders issued jointly with the Russians must be observed when it suits our convenience, but otherwise denying their validity. Take for instance the question of the seven remaining Nuremberg "war criminals" incarcerated in Spandau Fortress in Berlin, and watched over by alternating American, British, French and Russian guards. The regime at the prison is harsh and three of the prisoners, Doenitz, Raeder, and Von Neurath, are men around eighty years old, and in such poor health that they are expected to die very soon. It is at least questionable whether these old men are guilty of "war crimes," and the Germans consider that the two former admirals are being punished merely because they were patriots. Yet, whenever the German government requests either a more humane prison regime or a review of their sentences, it is told that this is impossible because the Four Power Control Council has supreme authority, and the Russians would never agree. This Control Council has, of course, been practically defunct since our break with the Soviets at the time of the Berlin blockade.

A HIGHLY respected German lawyer, Dr. Otto Kranzbuehler, wrote to me recently concerning the U.S. High Commissioner's refusal of the German Foreign Office request

that Admiral Raeder be permitted to visit his dying son last January. In his letter he says:

It is beyond me to understand the position of the late American Administration in this matter. How is it possible to believe they can recruit reliable German soldiers as allies against Russia while highly respected top soldiers like Raeder and Doenitz are held in jail under the joint guard of U.S. and Soviet troops? How can they tell the Bonn government to rearm in spite of a Control Council law prohibiting any kind of rearmament under the penalty of death and, at the same time, maintain that the Control Council is the supreme authority in Germany which alone has power by unanimous vote, to review the sentences of the Spandau prisoners? There is no logic in this position, let alone honesty or humane feeling.

The "war criminal" issue is a burning question in Germany. Over and over again I was asked by Germans in all walks of life: "How can you expect us to join you against Soviet Russia so long as you continue to hold in prison officers and enlisted men whose sole crime is having fought for their country, or having taken measures against Communist partisans which you too will find necessary in an all-out war against people who do not themselves observe international law?"

Some of the hundreds of Germans still held in prison in all three Western zones were undoubtedly guilty of atrocious crimes. But all of them will continue to be regarded

by the Germans as victims of "victors' justice" until the evidence on which they were convicted is re-examined by an impartial tribunal or by German courts. For it has been established in the case of some of the men now released that they were convicted on hearsay, double hearsay, and other questionable evidence including the intimidation of witnesses.

Anyone who thinks that Hitler's crimes justify our denial to the Germans of freedom, equality and justice under law, should at least realize that by contributing armed forces to a European army they will be sacrificing more and risking more than any other people on our side.

NO ONE can doubt that if war comes West Germany will face a fratricidal war, with the East Germans forcibly inducted into the Soviet armies and Germany once again devastated by the Red Army and our air force. The fact that next time the western powers and Soviet Russia will be fighting each other will make little difference to the Germans, who will suffer as much or more than when they were fighting us both. Moreover, unless and until we repudiate the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, German soldiers in the next war could, as Dr. Kranzbuehler points out, be put to death when captured according to "laws" we ourselves have sanctioned.

The immediate consequence of signing up with the West is to "pet-

rify" the division of Germany and to condemn twenty million East Germans to lasting Communist slavery. All the assurances given by our McCloyes, Dulleses and Conants, and by Chancellor Adenauer himself, that "the power of attraction" of a free, strong and prosperous Western community will lead to the reunification of Germany without war, sound silly or hypocritical to the Germans. Both Nazi rule and their knowledge of conditions in East Germany and in Russia itself have taught them that no people under the heel of a totalitarian dictatorship can decide its own destiny. They realize that however greatly the East Germans, or the subjects of any other "people's democracy," may be attracted by the free world, anyone who so much as expresses a desire to join it will end up in a slave-labor camp, or be executed. The constantly increasing number of people fleeing from East Germany to Berlin proves that the "power of attraction" of the West can lead only to a mass exodus of East Germans to already overcrowded and overpopulated West Germany.

The Berliners, who ought to know, believe the Soviet Empire is so constituted that a bolder Western policy could force the Russians out of Eastern Europe without war. But most Western Germans are as reluctant as we are to take such a calculated risk. They would therefore in all probability make a virtue of necessity if by abandoning present

hope of German reunification, they could win liberty and the right to self defense, together with the possibility of providing homes and work for the millions of expellees and refugees from East Germany. As things are, they feel they are being asked to "sacrifice their brothers in the East" for a very dubious mess of pottage.

AS IF to intensify their fears and dim their hopes, the Mutual Security Agency chief in Bonn announced the end of economic assistance to West Germany last November at the very time when the stream of refugees coming to Berlin was rising from hundreds to thousands a day.

To appreciate the problem constituted by the present flood of destitute refugees to Berlin, one must know that one in five of the population of West Germany is an expellee or refugee. In spite of heroic efforts made to absorb them, there remains a hard core of a million unemployed. Moreover, a large proportion of the victims of Yalta and Potsdam (expelled from their homes east of the Oder-Neisse line and from Czechoslovakia) are women and children whose husbands and fathers are either dead, or slave laborers in Russia. The four million German wounded war veterans, people crippled in air raids, and the widows and children of the fallen, swell the total of persons who have to be supported by pensions or doles to 21 per cent of the population. Direct and indirect

taxation in the Federal Republic is already so high that it cannot be substantially increased without stultifying enterprise, or reducing the German worker's standard of living below its present very low level. In West Germany a wage of 50 to 60 dollars a month is normal, with about 125 dollars a month for the most highly skilled workers. The middle-class and white-collar workers are no better, if not worse off. Taxes on such "luxuries" as coffee and tea and cocoa are so high as to put them out of reach of consumption for the majority of the population, and the per capita consumption of meat is lower than in England. Yet the Germans are told that they require no more American aid, while France, which makes no real effort to become self-sufficient, which is not overpopulated, which has some of the richest agricultural land in Europe, and has no refugee problem, continues to receive huge sums of dollar aids to balance its budget and narrow its "dollar gap." No wonder the Germans say that American policy is designed to help only those who do not try to help themselves, and fails to take account of Germany's special difficulties.

ALL this is not to say that the Germans would not rally to our side, in spite of the grim future they face as our allies, provided only that we treated them as equals and gave them something to fight for. Thanks to their sufferings under Russian occu-

pation or as prisoners of war, and to the close-up view of the "Workers' Paradise" they obtained as soldiers, the Germans have no illusions about Communism. More than any other European people on our side of the Iron Curtain, they both fear and hate it. But this knowledge and experience works both ways. Given arms and equal rights in the Atlantic community and some hope of liberating East Germany, and regaining their lost territories east of the Oder-Neisse line if war comes, there is little doubt that the Germans would become our trustworthy allies. But they know the enemy too well to imagine that anything short of an all-out effort can stem the tide of Communist aggression, much less offer any hope of liberation to the peoples of Eastern Europe.

Few Germans wish to join up with Soviet Russia in order to get their revenge on us. But if the alternative we offer is too bleak and hopeless, a majority may yet be driven, in despair, to try and save themselves by coming to an understanding with our enemies.

THE defense of what is left of the free world requires something far harder than being anti-Communist or anti-Nazi. We have got to learn to stop hating and mistrusting our former enemies if we are to meet the clear and present danger now constituted by our former allies. This requires sufficient humility on our part to recognize the fact that the

Germans are people like ourselves, and to realize that we too have sinned by our bargains with Moscow, although we've never been driven by humiliation and despair and economic pressure to follow a Hitler or a Stalin.

Unless we can forgive and forget, practice what we preach, and bury the remnants of the Morgenthau Plan, which still clutter the ground and poison the atmosphere, we shall never be able to construct a European Defense Community. And just as Americans have now to fight almost alone in Korea because we abandoned the Nationalist government of China to its enemies and ours, so we shall be called upon to bear the main burden of a war in Europe if we fail to support the Federal Republic of Germany, and help it solve its grave problems.

Recent history should have taught us the folly of denying concessions and support to a democratic and friendly Germany. German democracy was destroyed twenty years ago because we refused to the Weimar Republic the rights which Hitler extorted from us. Dr. Adenauer and his government have given abundant evidence that they represent a Germany ready and willing to join our side in the struggle against totalitarian tyranny. Are we going to permit them to be undermined, as Chiang Kai-shek was undermined, by those who willingly, or unwittingly, help the Communists by false reports of German realities?